

Reflective Resolution

And so another year passes by and another begins. And it is on these occasions, as at other times too, that we pause and think: we reflect, and we resolve. We reflect on the past year, the things that have happened, the things we have encountered, the changes that have taken place. And we look forward with resolve: not just the resolve to go on, but also the resolve, perhaps, to try and do things differently; to make some changes ourselves to the way we do things, or to our priorities.

Mostly these resolutions are very personal and are about the way we do things ourselves.

But 'no man is an island', as John

Donne wrote; and so many of our resolutions also have an effect on those around us - perhaps the best resolutions have always got the better interests of others as their goal.

But it may be also, that our resolutions are not just about ourselves; perhaps they are for our church, the wider community, or even for the world.

The difficulty is that when we reflect upon the society in which we live, or our world, the problems, and the solutions, can seem so enormous; and we seem so small and insignificant by comparison, so powerless to effect change. How can we as individuals possibly do anything to bring about the unity of the Church, alleviate global poverty or disease, or bring justice to the oppressed?

And when we think about change itself, in many other areas of our lives, change is so rapid and immense, uncontrollable. In addition to the enormous rate of change in, for example, technology, medicine and genetic engineering, we have enormous changes now in the environment through climate change.

Consequently, the resolutions we make are inclined to be of a more manageable and achievable kind; our resolutions become very personal and relatively limited.

I recently came across some words of John Masefield (1878-1967):

'To most of us the future seems unsure; but then it has always been; and we who have seen great changes must have great hopes.'

Perhaps we need to be brave enough to have great hopes: great hopes for ourselves, great hopes for our churches and congregations; great hopes for our communities and society; great hopes for our world. And, of course, the resolve and determination to set about working for their fulfilment.

May God bless us at the beginning of this year, throughout its duration, and always - and may God work great things through us.

Fr. John



Chronicles

Ministry of Healing

Healing Services:

St Francis Church

Tuesday 7th January 7.00 pm

St James Church

Wednesday 28th January

7.30 pm

The ministry of healing is available at St James' Church every Sunday during the 10 o'clock service. Please go to St Luke's Chapel after you have received Communion where members of the Healing Team will be available to listen and to pray in complete confidence.



Senior Citizen's Alphabet



A for arthritis,
 B for bad back,
 C is for chest pains.
 Perhaps cardiac?
 D is for dental decay and decline,
 E is for eyesight
 - can't read that top line.
 F is for fissures and fluid retention
 G is for gas
 (which I'd rather not mention)
 H for high blood pressure
 (I'd prefer low)
 I for incisions with scars you can show.
 J is for joints, that now fail to flex
 L's for libido -
 what happened to s--?
 Wait! I forgot about K!
 K is for my knees that crack
 when they're bent
 (Please forgive my memory)
 N for neurosis,
 pinched nerves and stiff neck
 O is for osteo-
 and all bones that crack
 P for prescriptions,
 I have quite a few
 Give me another pill;
 I'll be good as new!
 Q is for queasiness. Fatal or flu?
 R is for reflux -
 one meal turns into two
 S is for sleepless nights,
 counting my fears
 T for tinnitus -
 I hear bells in my ears
 U is for urinary:
 difficulties with flow
 V is for vertigo,
 that's 'dizzy', you know.
 W is worry,
 now what's going 'round?
 X is for X ray--
 and what might be found.
 Y's for the year
 I've just left behind,
 And Z is for zest
 that I still have my mind,
 I've survived all the symptoms
 my body's deployed,
 And kept twenty-six doctors
 gainfully employed!!

Sundays @ Six at St James

The first Sunday of the month at 6 o'clock

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| January 4 th | Evensong for Epiphany |
| February 1 st | Evening Praise |
| March 7 th | Waiting on the Word |
| April 4 th | The Way of the Cross |
| May 2 nd | The Easter Experience |
| June 6 th | Exploring the Trinity |

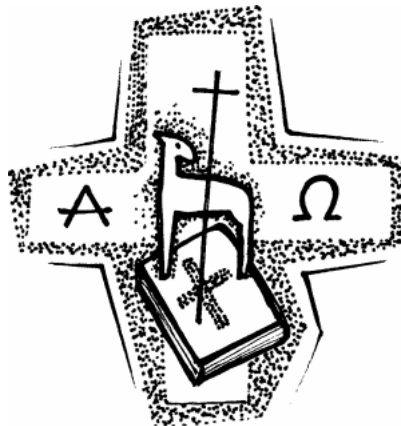


Morning Prayer

& Breakfast

St Francis Church
 Saturday Mornings
 9.15 am

all welcome



ANGEL CHIMES AT CHRISTMAS

Thoughts of a young man far from home

*Where am I when no pieces fit;
when bells aren't rung?
Angels, won't you chime me to it;
be overhung
the flickering flames, that give names
back to the young.*

*God be thanked that these lit up;
moved in a ring,
trumpets raised, with bright blasts
of tinkling;
each pippin blare sounding the air
of remembering.*

*Then I saw the little band,
eyes wide with trust,
gently stir: heat and light
and icing dust;
the snowy cloth no sign of moth
or crumb of rust,*

*pacing the peace of the Christmas tea
within that room;
marking time between bursts of laughter,
like a metronome;
so all family dear, far and near,
might call this home;*

*and on, and on, until shadows grew
and the circle slowed,
and the music waned (for their arms were tired),
as the candles bowed;
and warmth and love began to move
off down the road.*

Christmas Past



As we pack away the decorations for another year, instead of my usual interview this month I have asked several people to recall one particular Christmas memory. What an amazing variety of stories they have to tell:-

Thelma Telling.

One Christmas Day found me in bed by order of the doctor. I was suffering from a severe chest infection and feeling very sorry for myself. About 10.30am I heard the Sanctuary bell ring out at St James Church and was able to join with the congregation at least in spirit. Then about 11.30am a wonderful surprise. Father Edward Walker and a group of children came to visit. The children sang carols and Father Walker gave me my Christmas communion – truly a Christmas to remember.

Gwen Ranklin.

In the 1950's and 1960's our family spent Christmas with my parents in my home village of Outwell in Norfolk. In those days the journey across country took several hours either by

train or car, but it was an exciting time for the children and important to us all to reach Beechwood, my parents home.

One nightmare journey I recall was in 1956. Elizabeth our 5 year old was now at school and we had to delay our journey until school broke up. We collected Elizabeth from school in a taxi after her school Christmas party had finished and with our two sons Richard, 4 years, and Jonathan 6 months, proceeded to Oxford station. We expected to catch the 4 pm train to London, then cross London to King's Cross station to catch the 7pm train to Peterborough. We found Oxford station crowded with people who were still waiting for the morning train, all trains delayed by fog.

A train arrived and we managed to get on, standing in the corridor by the toilet with the carrycot standing on our large suitcase and the other two children sitting on bags. Before we reached Didcot the train lights failed and we continued a slow journey to London in the dark.

On arrival at King's Cross station at 7.55pm we discovered our 7pm train was just about to leave and a kind porter helped us run the length of the platform to a 1st class carriage. After pushing us in and closing the door the whistle was blowing!! Alas we were not going straight to Peterborough on that train, we would have to

get off at March, much nearer to my home but we were being met by car at Peterborough- oh for a mobile phone to let my Father know where we were and save him a 30mile journey! We finally arrived at Beechwood after midnight to enjoy our family Christmas celebrations for the next week.

Each year we celebrated Christmas in a traditional way. My mother being creative would have made the decorations and holly and evergreen would lay between the brightly shining copper and brass on the Welsh dresser and share the oak beams with the many horse brasses in the breakfast room. Large yule logs especially kept for Christmas would bum in the fireplace. The Christmas tree lights would shine (when I was a child we had clip on candles). It was a magical setting for the family to enjoy the wonderful food my parents provided, and for the conversations, fun and laughter that was exchanged round the large refectory table by the 12 to 14 family members. They looked back and recounted tales of joy, sadness and scandals that had touched their lives and those who lived in the village community. The final carol 'O Come All ye Faithful' on Christmas night would move me to tears of joy and thanks that I was celebrating the birth of Our Lord both in God's house and with my own family in my childhood home.

Len Chung – Memories of an East End Christmas.

I had a stocking by my bed containing an orange, boiled sweets, chocolates and a special present, a pressed tin clockwork car of German manufacture (much sought after by collectors today.)

In excitement we ran about in our night clothes wishing each other 'Happy Christmas' until supervised by my brother Esmond, 2 years my senior I washed and dressed.

For breakfast my mother made a large pot of porridge. The family then consisted of 6 children, to grow to 7 a few years later. We ate breakfast in the living room around a wooden table scrubbed as white as snow in front of the kitchen range, that also provided us with hot water.

My mother had already attended Midnight Mass so stayed at home with my baby sister to prepare Christmas dinner. We boys were escorted to Church by our elder sisters. The Victorian Church of St Peter's looked lovely with a crib and candles, greenery and decorations. All the lights in church were on, only switched on for such joyful occasions. Esmond and I enjoyed singing carols in the choir each dressed in clean white surplices especially laundered and flat-ironed smooth by our mother.

After church we went to see Grandfather. He gave us half a crown each and sent us swiftly home to mother. It was warm indoors and smelt of bacon, turkey, brussels and homemade

Christmas pudding (boiling in a basin, tied up with a white cloth-ours always had silver 3d bits inside.)

My father had his own business and had to work most of Christmas day, but usually appeared at teatime, happy to be home with his family. In the evening we would all sit round the fire roasting chestnuts and listening to stories until I fell asleep and was then put into bed by my Mum.

Father John

There will be many people, no doubt who have very specific memories of one particular Christmas, or a small number of Christmases. My own recollections are not like that. It's not that I have a special aversion to Christmas, rather it's that there have been many good Christmases for me – there has not been one particular time which has been amazingly better than the others, nor has there been one which is marked because it has come with especial difficulty or sadness.

And so I remember as a young choirboy desperately trying to stay awake so that I could go to Midnight Mass (and waking in the morning disappointed because sleep had overcome me!). I remember achieving this dream and the wonder of singing in the choir in worship in the middle of the night.

I remember in my teenage years walking round our village in Northumberland carol singing – both singing in the darkness along the roads of the

village and being invited indoors to sing for families and friends in some of the big houses.

I remember going out into the woods near our house in Carlisle with Clare when we were newly married, to collect a nice fallen branch which we could decorate indoors at our home because we couldn't afford a 'real' Christmas tree.

I remember the joys of celebrating Christmas in our own home with our own family and the ways in which our own Christmas family traditions grew.

I remember the Christmas we spent together in a tiny rented house in the middle of Reading re-united as a family after I had been living away from home for some months.

I remember the privileges and joys of celebrating Christmas with other members of God's family in the places where I have served following my ordination.

And I look forward to this Christmas – and to celebrating with member of St Francis Church, our own parish, and



the whole world-wide family of the Church, the birth of our Lord and Saviour, the Incarnation of our God – there is no other event like it in the whole of human history.

Rosanne Butler.

Christmas 1960 was my second married Christmas and I was heavily pregnant with my first child. Until 20th December I taught my class of 7 & 8 year olds in The Hut at the top of Beauchamp Lane. I was due to begin my maternity leave that afternoon, but had to keep an appointment at the antenatal clinic at the old Nuffield maternity hospital in Walton Street in the morning.

School Christmas had been hectic as ever, carol service, parties, putting up decorations, the Christmas play (my class did 'Sleeping Beauty' that year) and throughout I loved it all. But when it came to blood pressure time at the clinic mine was 'way up'. 'You're staying in' they told me. 'No way' I answered, ' my class are waiting for their end of

term prizes, Christmas story and cards to take home. I'm off back to school. If you'll let me just do this I'll come in tomorrow like a lamb'. Well they did let me and I was found a bed in the Churchill hospital where the following day, I lay, like a stuffed turkey, fearing that I'd be stuck there till the end of January when the baby was due.

On Christmas Eve a very excited 24 year old was waiting to tell her anxious husband that she could go home, back to our tiny flat in Cowley Road. We had no phone nor did my parents so they knew nothing of the drama. I walked into our living room and there was a tiny Christmas tree which Frank had decorated, little sprigs of evergreen over the mirror, the Woolworth's decorations I had hung up the year before rehung in the bay window. A room never looked more lovely.

Our dear landlady in the flat downstairs invited us for Christmas lunch and afterwards with no T.V. no car and me being told to take it steady, we

went back upstairs listened to the radio and made a huge jigsaw puzzle. We were the happiest couple in the world.

By the way I must mention that for me, every one on my 36 school Christmases were Christmases to remember – magical.



TOP TEN BEAUTY TIPS FOR 2004

1. For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.
2. For beautiful eyes, look for the good in other people.
3. To lose weight, let go of stress, hatred, anger, contentment and the need to control others.
4. To improve your ears, listen to the word of God.
5. To improve your nose, smell the roses in your life and count your blessings, giving thanks for each one of them.
6. For poise, walk with knowledge and self-esteem. Rather than walk this earth lightly, walk firmly with determination and leave your mark.
7. To strengthen your arms, hug at least 3 people a day. Touch someone with your love.
8. To strengthen your heart, forgive yourself and others. Don't worry and hurry so much.
9. To strengthen your back, carry someone else's burden for them.
10. For the ultimate in business, casual or evening attire put on the robe of Christ; it fits like a glove but allows room for growth. Best of all, it never goes out of style and is appropriate for any occasion.

Do these things on a daily basis – and they will certainly make you a more beautiful person.



PRAYING AT THE WHEEL

What do you do when you're stuck in a traffic jam? Nearly 3 out of 4 of us pray, it seems, according to research carried out by the RAC Foundation.

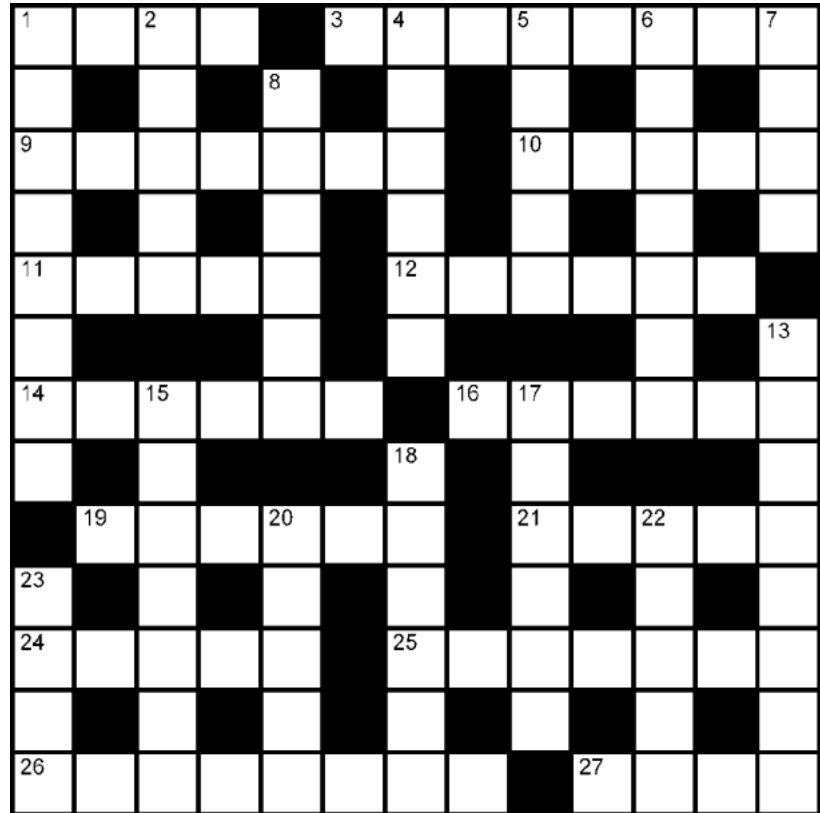
A nationwide survey of 898 motorists found that nearly three in four drivers admit to saying the odd prayer while behind the wheel, and 22 per cent say they pray regularly.

While some motorists were praying: 'Get me out of this', others asked 'Please make sure the speed camera didn't have film.' However, not all prayers were selfish. More than half of those who admitted praying said their prayers were for other people suffering in some way.

A church minister, commenting on the survey, said: "Prayer is a great stress buster. God doesn't fix speed cameras or traffic lights but He can fix people, whether they are driving or not."



January's Crossword



CLUES

Across

- 1 A unit of area (4840 square yards) (4)
- 3 Tribe of Israel named after a grandson of Jacob (8)
- 9 Items inserted in a written record (7)
- 10 Original language of the New Testament (5)
- 11 Ruth's mother-in-law (5)
- 12 Sister of Mary and Lazarus (6)
- 14 Depressing in character or appearance (6)
- 16 An alloy of copper and tin (6)
- 19 Woody tropical grass having hollow woody stems (6)
- 21 Father of Abram (5)
- 24 Go up or advance (5)
- 25 Biblical mistress of Samson (7)
- 26 Learned persons (8)
- 27 Curved structure that spans an opening (4)

Down

- 1 One of the three young men cast into the furnace at the order of Nebuchadnezzar (8)
- 2 Relative sizes (5)
- 4 Accept without verification or proof (6)
- 5 One of the deadly sins (5)
- 6 Name of the first Christian martyr (7)
- 7 A long walk (4)
- 8 Sister of Moses and Aaron (6)
- 13 Eighth of the Judges of Israel (8)
- 15 Shortest book of the Old Testament (7)
- 17 A baby's toy (6)
- 18 Be amazed at (6)
- 20 Tower built by the descendants of Noah (5)
- 22 A person who royally commands (5)
- 23 Decorates with frosting (4)

December's Solution



Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

| | |
|----------|---|
| 8.00 am | Holy Communion |
| 10.00 am | Sung Eucharist (<i>exc 2nd Sunday</i>) All Age Eucharist (<i>2nd Sunday</i>) |
| 6.00 pm | Evening Service [<i>1st Sunday of the month</i>] |

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

| | |
|----------|---|
| 8.00 am | Holy Eucharist |
| 10.30 am | Parish Eucharist [<i>Family Eucharist - 2nd Sunday of the month</i>] |

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

| | | |
|-----------|----------|---|
| Monday | 9.00 am | Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| Tuesday | 9.00 am | Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</i> |
| | 8.00 pm | St Francis Discussion Group – <i>4 Long Close</i> |
| Wednesday | 9.00 am | Morning Prayer – <i>St Francis</i> |
| | 9.30 am | Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i> |
| | 10.10 am | Mothers and Toddlers – <i>St Francis</i> |
| | 12.00 pm | St James Prayer Group – <i>13 Clive Road</i> |
| Thursday | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 9.00 am | Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| | 9.30 am | Eucharist - followed by coffee – <i>St James</i> |
| | 11.00 am | St Francis Prayer Group |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</i> |
| Friday | 7.00 pm | Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i> |
| | 9.00 am | Morning Prayer – <i>St Francis</i> |
| | 5.00 pm | Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i> |
| Saturday | 7.00 pm | Friday Club – <i>alt Fridays at St Francis</i> |
| | 9.15 am | Morning Prayer & Breakfast – <i>St Francis</i> |

Arrangements for Baptisms, Banns of Marriage, Weddings, Confessions and Home Communion can be made with any of the clergy.

Days Off

Stephen has Friday off; Fr John and Mark have Mondays. Except in emergency, please try and respect these days of rest. Sr Margaret Anne works within the parish on Tuesdays, Thursdays and on alternate Sundays.

Parish Directory

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Norah Shallow
Tel: 765199

DEPUTY WARDENS:

Rosanne Butler
Tel: 453257
Helen Doling
Tel: 779626